



# German Storytelling: Narrative and Identity

GRM 455: Major Themes in German Cultural History  
3 cr. / Pre-req. Tier 1 / Rec. 2 courses of 301/302/311/325/341/342

Fall 2016 | Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1-2:20 pm | A 126 Wells Hall

## Instructor

Professor Lynn L. Wolff

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:30-13:30, and by appointment

## Course Assistant

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B-240 Wells

Thursdays, 2:30-3:30

## Course Description

Storytelling is an essential part of human nature just as stories are an essential component of human culture. In this course we will examine how this anthropological given has developed over the ages, exploring different types of stories while also determining the various functions these stories serve, ranging from the personal to the political. We will read fairy tales, children stories, literary essays, comics, and short stories, as well as excerpts from (auto)biographical works and an entire novel. We will consider how stories, like myths of origin or national narratives, help us explain complex phenomena and contested histories and allow us to creatively explore new possibilities. We will also consider how other non-narrative forms, such as paintings, photography, music, and dance, tell a story. The following questions will guide our considerations of how storytelling has evolved over time: What is a story? Who tells stories? In which form and for what purpose are stories told? We will see how the answers to these questions vary depending on the social and historical circumstances.

This course requires daily reading and writing in preparation for the class discussions. GRM 455 is also a **Tier II/writing intensive** course. In the context of a foreign language class, that means attention *both* to your ever-increasing mastery of German linguistic structures *and* to your mastery of the art of verbal argumentation. The structure of assignments reflects this dual purpose.

Taken together, the readings, activities and assignments for the course are designed to help you:

1. learn about German culture of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as reflected in the texts, images, and films that we read, view, and discuss;
2. gain an understanding and appreciation of the dynamic, historically specific nature of reading practices; and of the social, psychological, and political functions of literature and the arts;
3. hone the fundamental skills of observation, description, analysis, and evaluation, which can be applied in all fields;
4. identify and interpret works in different prose genres, including “high” culture vs. “popular” forms;
5. improve your ability to read, write, comprehend and speak in German.

## Required Texts

- Course Reader of all texts (except *Ruhm*), available at the Bookstore in the International Center
- Daniel Kehlmann, *Ruhm* (2009), available at the Student Book Store
- A *good* German-English dictionary (e.g., Langenscheid, Oxford Duden, Pons, etc.); or proficiency using a good online dictionary (dict.leo.org, dict.cc, etc. – but NOT GoogleTranslate!)

## Requirements and Grading

### 1. Regular attendance and active participation (20%)

For a successful, discussion-based seminar, all participants need to be consistently present. Each student has particular strengths and brings a valuable perspective: pledge to yourself to contribute to discussion in every session. By doing so, you will gain in confidence and verbal skill – and you'll demonstrate in class that you are reading and thinking. **Non-participation (i.e. silence or passivity) will negatively impact this part of your grade. You are responsible for any information or announcements in a session that you miss. Three or more absences will negatively affect your grade.** As always, allowances will be made for circumstances beyond your control (emergencies, illness, accident, etc.). **If you have to miss class, please email me beforehand and contact your fellow students for notes on what you missed.**

### 2. Short reflections/questions (20%)

You will write **three one-page reflection papers** on the texts we read and discuss (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font). This is an opportunity to formulate your own response to the work and/or pose questions that have arisen for you. Due dates are indicated in the weekly plan below.

### 3. Assignments (20%)

In addition to the required reading and preparation for discussions, you will complete **six assignments outside of class that will help facilitate research skills, make connections between the course material and your own interests, and allow you to work creatively.** These assignments can also serve as the basis for discussions both in and outside of class. Due dates are in the weekly plan; further instructions will be provided in class.

### 4. Discussion leader (20%)

Small groups of 2-3 students will lead the class discussion of one chapter of Daniel Kehlmann's novel *Ruhm*. **The group is responsible for preparing a vocabulary list and questions as well as a clear plan for how to structure the discussion and engage the entire class in an activity.** See handout for details.

### 5. Semester project (20%)

Throughout the semester you will work with a group to create a **multimedia storytelling project** in German that is connected to the main texts and topics of the course. Alternatively, you can write a paper of 8-10 pages. The topics and format for all projects and papers will be determined in consultation with me. Presentations of the projects/papers will be made during the final exam time for this course. See handout for further guidelines.

### **Policy on late work and missed deadlines**

Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified. I will not accept late work **unless you have cleared it with me in advance**. Malfunctioning cars and printers, hungry dogs, etc. are generally not acceptable excuses.

#### **Grading System:**

- Active Participation	20%
- Reflection Papers	20%
- Assignments	20%
- Discussion Leader	20%
- Semester Project	20%

#### **Grading Scale:**

90-100 = 4.0	70-75 = 2.0
86-89 = 3.5	66-69 = 1.5
80-85 = 3.0	60-65 = 1.0
76-79 = 2.5	Below 60 = 0.0
70-75 = 2.0	

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and its Consequences**

The Michigan State University code of academic conduct forbids you to present another's work as your own. Therefore, every submitted work must be your own original work created explicitly for this class. It must not be paraphrased or directly quoted from another work without proper use of quotation marks and proper citations. One incident of plagiarism or cheating will merit you a failing grade for the course. Please consult the Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Ombudsman's resources on plagiarism: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html>

In a course where students frequently collaborate or get help from a tutor, there might sometimes be confusion about the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable assistance. You must always be sure in what ways someone else has corrected your submitted work. Any time you submit work that is not your own as your own, be it from a tutor, a friend or an online translation program, it is considered plagiarism. Please consult with me if you have any questions about this matter.

### **Communication with Instructor**

- Email is often a wonderful way of communicating quickly. Before writing: 1) please be sure that the answer is not somewhere in the syllabus or on D2L; 2) ask yourself if you can wait and ask me during office hours or at our next class session.
- You are welcome to call my office phone. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.
- You are also required to check your email and D2L daily, as these are the primary methods for distributing information to the class.

### **Cell Phones and Laptops**

Students are allowed to take notes using their laptops, however all handouts and readings must be printed out. This way, you can more easily take notes on vocabulary and mark important or unclear passages. Cell phones are only permitted in class when an online dictionary is needed.

### **Disability Accommodation**

MSU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

# Wochenplan

[Änderungen noch möglich – Alle Texte außer *Ruhm* sind im Course Reader]

## 1. Woche – Einführung in das Thema

Di., 1. Sept. Organisatorisches und Überblick – Beobachten, Beschreiben, Erzählen

**Aufgabe 1: Eine Liste und eine Geschichte (am Dienstag, 6. Sept. fällig)**

## 2. Woche – Die Bausteine des Erzählens: Zeigen vs. Erzählen

Di., 6. Sept. Klauk/Köppe: „Showing vs. Telling“ (2013)

Do., 8. Sept. Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, „Die Biene und die Henne“ (1774)

## 3. Woche – Gastautor / Erzählungen für Kinder I: Fabel und Märchen

Di., 13. Sept. Ulrich Peltzer, *Teil der Lösung* (2007)

**\*19 Uhr, B122 Wells: Ulrich Peltzer Lesung und Diskussion!**

Do., 15. Sept. Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm, *Dornröschen* und *Aschenputtel* (1812-15)  
Flöthmann, *Grimms Märchen ohne Worte* (2013)

## 4. Woche – Erzählungen für Kinder II: Erschreckende und Fantastische Bilder

Di., 20. Sept. Heinrich Hoffmann, „Struwwelpeter“ (Auszug) (1845)

Do., 22. Sept. Peter Bichsel, „Die Erde ist rund“ (1997)  
Wyatt Mason, „Audiobooks read by the Author“ (2016)

**Aufgabe 2: Songtext kommentieren (27.9 fällig)**

## 5. Woche – Erzählen durch Musik

Di., 27. Sept. Franz Schubert/Wilhelm Müller, *Die Winterreise* (1828)

Do., 29. Sept. Arbeitstag für Lesen, Schreiben und Projekte Planen

**Reaktion 1 (4.10 fällig)**

## 6. Woche – Liebesgeschichten [Aufgabe: Erzählung]

Di., 4. Okt. Johann Peter Hebel, „Unverhofftes Wiedersehen“ (1811)

Do., 6. Okt. Robert Walser, „Eine verflixte Geschichte“ (1916), „Eine Geschichte“ (1921)

**Aufgabe 3: Recherche in der Bibliothek (11.10 fällig)**

### 7. Woche – Ein Leben erzählen I: Biografie vs. Fallgeschichte

Di., 11. Okt. Georg Büchner, *Lenz* (1836)

Do., 13. Okt. Büchner, *Lenz*

**Aufgabe 4: Erzählung vorlesen und aufnehmen (18.10 fällig)**

### 8. Woche – Ein Leben erzählen II: Autobiographisches Erzählen

Di., 18. Okt. Zafer Şenocak, „Die Sprache öffnen“ aus *Deutschsein. Eine Aufklärungsschrift* (2011)

Do., 20. Okt. Yoko Tawada, „Von der Muttersprache zur Sprachmutter“ aus *Talisman* (2015)

### 9. Woche – (Un)zuverlässiges Erzählen, oder realistisches Erzählen und hypothetische Realitäten

Di., 25. Okt. Franz Kafka, *Das Urteil* (1913)

Do., 27. Okt. Kafkas kleinere Texte: „Die Bäume“ (1908), „Auf der Galerie“ (1919)

**Reaktion 2: 1.11 fällig**

### 10. Woche – Wer spricht? Perspektive (I)

Di., 1. Nov. W.G. Sebald, „Paul Bereyter“ (1992)

Do., 3. Nov. Sebald, „Paul Bereyter“

**Aufgabe 5: Bild auswählen – Inwiefern kann ein Bild eine Geschichte erzählen? (8.11 fällig)**

### 11. Woche – Wer spricht...und mit wem? Perspektive (II)

Di., 8. Nov. Wolf Haas, *Wie die Tiere* (2001), *Das ewige Leben* (2003) (Auszüge)

Do., 10. Nov. Projekttag / Diskussionsleitung – Einzelne Treffen mit Kim Bowen

**Aufgabe 6: Was und wie erzählt ein Podcast? (15.11 fällig)**

### 12. Woche – Wer erzählt? Multiperspektivisches Erzählen

Di., 15. Nov. Daniel Kehlmann, *Ruhm. Ein Roman in neuen Geschichten* („Stimmen“)  
Zu Gast: Prof. McConeghy!

Do., 17. Nov. Kehlmann, *Ruhm* („In Gefahr“, „Rosalie geht sterben“)

13. Woche – Wer erzählt? Multiperspektivisches Erzählen

Di., 22. Nov. Kehlmann, *Ruhm* („Der Ausweg“, „Osten“)

Do., 24. Nov. Thanksgiving!

14. Woche – Wer erzählt? Multiperspektivisches Erzählen

Di., 29. Nov. Kehlmann, *Ruhm* („Antwort an die Äbtissin“, „Ein Beitrag zur Debatte“)

Do., 1. Dez. Kehlmann, *Ruhm* („Wie ich log und starb“)

15. Woche – Erzählen im Film

Di., 6. Dez. Kehlmann, *Ruhm* („In Gefahr“) + Filmabend um 19 Uhr!

Do., 8. Dez. Diskussion des Films: *Ruhm*

**Reaktion 3: 8.12 fällig**

16. Woche – Präsentation der Projekte

Di., 13. Dez., 12:45-14:45, A126 Wells